

Doing your part

Water conservation tips in and around the home

We should always conserve water, but it's especially important when water levels are low. Ontario has had a year of dry weather, with little rain or snow. Conserving water will help slow the decline of water levels in reservoirs and wells.

Water is a precious resource – it's a life-line for humans and for all living things. Unfortunately, we often take water for granted, believing that supplies are unlimited. They're not. Residential consumption in particular is skyrocketing, growing faster than the rate of population growth.

Municipal supplies cannot keep pace with the heavy demand. There is a limit to how much and how fast water can be retrieved from lakes, treated and distributed to residents.

Every one of us can, and must, take action to conserve water at home, whether it's out-of-doors or in the kitchen or bathroom.

Repair all leaks

One of the first things you should do is find any leaky pipes or faucets. In addition to being annoying, they waste significant amounts of water and energy

- a good way to check for leaks is to turn off all taps in your home and check the water meter to see if water is still flowing – if it is, you've got a problem that should be fixed right away

Make sure you don't have leaky toilets – they can waste as much as 200 litres of water every day

- toilet leaks can be detected by adding a few drops of food colouring to the water in the toilet tank – if the coloured water appears in the bowl, the toilet is leaking and should be repaired

Outdoors

- don't water lawns and gardens or wash your car when a municipal water shortage warning is in effect
- water lawns and gardens no more than once a week – early morning or late evening watering reduces evaporation
- an inch of water a week should be sufficient for your lawn (keep an empty container under the sprinkler to do the measurement)
- use a pail of soapy water to wash your car and rinse it off quickly with the hose
- wash your car near the lawn or shrubs to make greater use of the water
- cut grass less frequently and to longer lengths – short cuts encourage evaporation
- leave grass clippings on the lawn – they retain moisture and fertilize at the same time
- use compost, grass and leaves as mulch on garden beds to prevent evaporation
- choose drought-resistant trees, plants and grasses that need less water

In the kitchen

- don't thaw frozen foods under running water – defrost them in the microwave or refrigerator
- don't rinse food or dishes under the tap – use some water in a bowl or in the sink
- don't run the tap for cold water – use ice cubes or keep a jug of water in the refrigerator

- compost kitchen wastes instead of using a garbage disposal
- use the water and energy saving cycle in the dishwasher – don't wash small loads
- add a water-saving aerator to the tap

In the bathroom

- whether you're building a new home or remodelling your bathroom, you should install low consumption (1.6 gal/flush) toilets
- place a toilet dam in the toilet tank to save as much as four litres a flush
- don't brush and rinse teeth with running water – use a glass
- take a shower instead of a bath
- if you do take a bath, use less water – a quarter full should be enough
- shower for five minutes instead of 10 – it will save about 40 litres of water
- if your shower has a single-handle control or shut off valve, turn off the flow while soaping or shampooing
- if the valve that diverts water from the tub spout to the showerhead is leaking, replace it
- water-saving shower heads can cut water use by 40 per cent and pay for themselves in as little as four months

Around the house

- wash only full loads of laundry
- save clothes that need hand washing to do all at once
- consider a more water-efficient washing machine – some newer models have their drum on the side and cut water use in half
- buy water purification or softening systems that are water-efficient

For more information on water conservation, please contact:

Public Information Centre
135 St. Clair Ave. W.
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5
Tel: (416) 325-4000
Fax: (416) 325-3159
Toll-free number: 1-800-565-4923
Internet: www.ene.gov.on.ca

